

PLANNING SAFE LESSONS

Questions to Ask Regarding General Safety Concerns

Answers

1. Do you have a copy of the federal, state, and local regulations that relate to school safety as well as a copy of your school district's policies and procedures? _____
2. Check your classroom. Are equipment and materials properly stored (in the right types of cabinets for chemicals, on sturdy shelving that won't tip over, and on deep shelving so that items won't fall off of easily)? _____
3. Are you familiar with possible hazards involved in using the equipment and materials in your room? _____
4. Do you know your school's policies and procedures in case of accidents? _____
5. At the start of each science activity, do you instruct students regarding potential hazards and precautions? _____
6. Is the number of students working together on an experiment limited to a number that can safely perform the experiment without causing confusion and accidents? _____
7. Do students have sufficient time to perform the experiments and clean up and properly store the equipment and materials after use? _____
8. Do you instruct students not to taste substances? Do you instruct students not to touch substances without first obtaining specific instructions from you? _____
9. Are your students aware that all accidents or injuries—no matter how small—should be reported to you immediately? _____
10. Do you instruct your students that it is unsafe to touch the face, mouth, eyes, and other parts of the body while they are working with plants, animals, or chemical substances and afterwards, until they have washed their hands and cleaned their nails? _____
11. Does your classroom have safety goggles and a first aid kit? Do you know how to use these items? Do students use the safety goggles? Are the goggles cleaned and disinfected after each use? _____
12. Are materials and supplies that students use stored in an area with plenty of space to avoid accidental collisions among students? _____

Questions to Ask Regarding Safe Use of Chemicals

Answers

1. Have you taught students that they must not mix chemicals "just to see what happens"? _____
2. Have you taught students to never taste chemicals and to wash their hands after use? _____
3. Do you forbid students from mixing acid and water? _____
4. Do you keep combustible materials in a metal cabinet equipped with a lock? _____
5. Do you store chemicals under separate lock in a cool, dry place but not in a refrigerator? _____
6. Do you store only a minimum amount of chemicals in the classroom? Do you give students only small amounts of materials to work with (such as a dropper bottle of vinegar rather than a gallon jug)? _____
7. Do you properly discard chemicals not used in a given period? _____
8. Are all chemicals labeled? _____
9. Do you keep handy a quick reference for precautions, antidotes, and proper disposal of all chemicals? _____

Questions to Ask Regarding Glassware

Answers

1. Do you use plastic instead of glass when possible? _____
2. Do students know how to use glassware? (For example, do they know how to insert glass tubing into a rubber stopper and how to heat hard glass test tubes—not from the bottom but tipped slightly and not in the direction of another student?) _____